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WILLIAM ROANE AYLETT.

BIRTH AND ANCESTRY.

William Roane Aylett was born May 14th, 1833, at "Montville", King William County, Virginia. "Montville" was part of the "Fairfield Plantation", the Aylett estate, which was a grant from the Crown to John Aylett, Cavalier and emigrant, in 1658. This property is still owned by the Aylett family and has never been out of the name.

On his father's side his ancestors were the Winstons, Dandriges, Macons, Henrys, and John West, Lord Delaware. He was the great grandson of Patrick Henry, through his grandmother, Elizabeth Henry, who married Philip Aylett. They are buried at Fairfield.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION.

The boyhood of Wm. R. Aylett was spent at Montville. He was always fond of fishing, hunting and outdoor life. His early education at Runford Academy, one of the oldest places of education in Virginia, was under noted educators in the classics, history, literature, mathematics and the sciences. He later entered the University of Virginia, where he completed his academic studies, and under the instruction of Prof. John B. Minor qualified himself for the profession he had chosen—law.

Soon after leaving the University, in 1854, he began the practice of law in King William and the surrounding counties. He very soon took a prominent position at the bar and was recognized as one of the leading lawyers of the courts in which he practiced. In response to the first call for volunteers in 1861, the patriot, Wm. R. Aylett, relinquished all civil pursuits and entered the military service of his State.

WAR RECORD.

In April, 1861, Wm. R. Aylett, then a young lawyer with a lucrative practice, offered his sword and life for the defense of Virginia. He raised a full company of volunteers, the first

company enlisting in Tidewater, Virginia, to go forth to battle for "State's Rights". The Company was mustered into service April 15th. Wm. R. Aylett was elected Captain. It was called the "Taylor Grays". On 2nd of May, it was mustered into service of the Confederate States. In April, 1862, the company was reorganized as Company D, 53rd Virginia regiment. Wm. R. Aylett was elected Captain, then Major and later Colonel.

The regiment was engaged in the Seven Days' Fight around Richmond, Cold Harbor, Gaines's Mill, charges on Malvern Hill July 1st, Wm. R. Aylett commanding. During the latter part of July 1862, the regiment participated in the capture of a whole brigade of Yankees below Drewry's Bluff. It was also engaged as follows: Aug. 29th, all-day, fight at Lee Springs in Fauquier County; Aug. 31st, Second Battle of Manassas; Sept. 16th, capture of Harpers Ferry; Sept. 17th, Sharpsburg; Dec. 13th, all-day fight at Fredericksburg. In February, 1863, the regiment was in a big fight at Newbern, N. C., and a fight on the Weldon R. R., and drove back the enemy. Then on to Gettysburg, where Col. Aylett, commanding the brigade, was wounded at Peachtree Hill, on July 3rd, 1863, and laid up for four months. He was with his command again at the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, then at Hanover C. H., Ashland, Johnson's Store, and Second Cold Harbor. Jan. 20th, 1864, his command was put in trenches at Bermuda Hundreds, where they stayed nine months, half clad, half fed, exposed to summer's hot sun, often without water, suffering intensely from the severe winter of '64-'65, without shelter. Col. Aylett never left his command, except perha on a short furlough to go home to see his wife who was quite sick. He was captured at Five Forks while urging his regiment on, and was sent to the prison on Johnson's Island.

He was engaged in twenty-two battles and several skirmishes.

RECONSTRUCTION DAYS.

The war over, Col. Aylett returned to the old home, "Montville", to find his farm depleted, fortunes ruined, and family

facing starvation. He resumed the practice of his profession with energy unsurpassed. From county to county and court to court, he made his unceasing round of professional trips; and to restore his farm and get food for his family, he went to work "at the plough". As a result of his labors he never realized a fortune, but reared and educated a large family. His home was known and visited by many and his hospitality was unbounded.

HIS PROFESSION.

After the Cluverius Case, he had quite a reputation as a criminal lawyer and was sought as prosecuting attorney in several murder trials. I recall the shooting in Danville of Mr. Moffett by Clarke, and of Mr. Colesby an Englishman, by Morgan, in Albemarle County. He won his case in each of these. He was Commonwealth's attorney of King William County for seventeen years.

MARRIAGE AND DEATH.

He married Alice Brockenbrough, of Richmond County, Virginia, who died at "Montville" on Dec. 11, 1895. He died on August 6, 1900, at 7:00 p. m., at "Montville", his life-long residence, surrounded by his children.

H. R. POLLARD.

Richmond, Va.